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SUBJECT: AFGHANISTAN: NEXT STEPS FOR COUNTER-NARCOTICS

Classified By: Ambassador Karl W. Eikenberry. Reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

11. (C) Summary. The U.S. Mission in Kabul is applying more resources and new capabilities to support Afghan government counter-narcotics (CN) interdiction efforts in 2009-2010. While downgrading/eliminating USG funding for large scale Afghan police eradication of poppy fields, we will expand agricultural assistance and ramp up interdiction and prosecution of narco-traffickers. New evidence-gathering capabilities, along with establishment of a CN intelligence fusion cell at Regional Command-South (RC-S), will extend the reach of DEA and ISAF interdiction operations in close coordination with vetted Afghan forces. Public information and demand reduction programs will grow. We will continue co-funding with the UK the Good Performers Initiative (GPI) and deepen bilateral strategy coordination. Comprehensive civilian-military CN planning and coordination will occur at the national, regional, and provincial levels to sustain the gains of the last two years and take advantage of the new security situation created by the influx of U.S. troops in the south. The Embassy will intensify its CN partnership with the Afghan government, ensuring more visible Afghan leadership. To reinforce all these efforts, we will create an executive strategy group joining the major international CN players in Kabul. The U.S. and our partners need to continue assistance to build Afghan capability and to keep up pressure to sustain and build political will for concerted enforcement and judicial action against drug networks. End Summary.

Overall CN Assistance Grows while Eradication Support Ends

12. (SBU) As new military campaigns improve security in the south, where virtually all of Afghanistan's opium poppy is now cultivated, the U.S. will boost assistance to the Afghan government in most of the eight pillars National Drug Control Strategy (NDCS). The sectors of agricultural assistance, interdiction, criminal justice, public information, and drug demand will see major funding increases. However, the State Department has terminated its contract with DynCorp International providing logistical and operational support to the Ministry of Interior's Poppy Eradication Force. Though we will no longer spend U.S. funds to support large scale eradication, the Afghan government has informed us emphatically that it will continue to apply eradication, which is one of the NDCS pillars, using their own resources and any other available external support.

New Resources for Agriculture

¶3. (SBU) USAID will expand agricultural assistance, especially in the poppy-prone southern provinces where U.S. military operations will continue. The goal is to increase licit crop production and provide farmers economic opportunities after military clearing operations. USAID's new "Afghanistan Vouchers for Increased Production in Agriculture Plus" (AVIPAP) \$250 million program for Helmand and Kandahar will provide at least 125,000 vouchers to farmers redeemable for agricultural supplies such as fruit and nut saplings, grape vines, and trellises. Cash-for-work programs will supply full-time employment for 166,000 people for six months. USAID will also offer to farmers and farmer associations small in-kind grants, training, and technical assistance to increase productivity. In addition, Embassy Kabul's Interagency Agriculture Team, consisting of staff from USAID, USDA, U.S. Army Agriculture Development Teams and USACE, are working together to implement the new U.S. Agriculture Assistance Strategy for Afghanistan. The new strategy is focused upon increasing productivity, creating jobs, raising incomes and strengthening the capacity of the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock.

Greater Focus on Interdiction

¶4. (SBU) This year DEA will dramatically increase its assistance to special units of the Counter-Narcotics Police of Afghanistan (CNPA) for Afghan-led interdiction of

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high-level traffickers. With Department of Defense funding support, the DEA Kabul Country Office is growing from 13 personnel in FY 2008 to 81, including 47 special agents, in FY 2010. DEA will embed agents in the CNPA National Interdiction Unit (NIU) teams operating from Regional Law Enforcement Centers in Konduz, Jalalabad, Herat, and Kandahar (the Konduz center is complete while the remaining centers will start operating in FY 2010). The NIU specializes in air mobile operations directed against targets such as clandestine labs and drug storage sites and has recently participated in U.S. military operations against narco-insurgency centers in Helmand province. Such DEA-backed Afghan cooperation with the U.S. military, ISAF, and other inter-agency partners against narco-insurgency targets will increase in the coming year, and we expect improved results.

New SIU Intercept Capability and Afghan Threat Finance Cell

¶5. (C) DEA has just brought on line a country-wide capability within the Sensitive Investigative Unit (SIU) of the CNPA to conduct judicially authorized telecommunications intercepts of drug trafficking organizations and narco-corrupt government officials. The SIU's 56 Afghan personnel have been vetted by means of polygraphs, background checks, and urinalysis prepared for their work with specialized training at Quantico, Virginia. SIU personnel will rise to 75 in FY ¶2010. DEA and other U.S. government offices will also support a new Afghan Threat Finance Cell (ATFC), an interagency body created by the National Security Council to identify and disrupt funding to the insurgency. Since the insurgency receives significant financial and material support from the drug trade, the Embassy and United States Forces-Afghanistan have directed that among ATFC's priorities will be targeting of narcotics traffickers who provide direct support to the insurgency and corrupt public officials connected to the drug trade.

Surer Prosecution of Major Traffickers

¶6. (SBU) The Embassy will do more to help the Afghan judiciary bring important traffickers to justice. The Department of Justice (DOJ) will increase assistance to the Counter Narcotics Justice Center (CNJC), a secure facility where high-level traffickers are investigated, tried, and detained. DOJ already provides legal advice and operational support to the CNJC's 35 CNPA investigators, 30 prosecutors, and 14 judges. DOJ's Afghanistan staff will grow in FY 2010 from the current number of six federal prosecutors and one police mentor to 12 DOJ prosecutors (in Kabul). DOJ currently has three police mentors at work in Kabul. Through the CN executive strategy group now being set up (see Paragraph 10), the Embassy will undertake coordinated high-level action to ensure that the Afghan government supports high-level prosecutions, convictions, and jail terms rather than obstructing them, as has occasionally been the government's practice.

More Resources for Public Information and Demand Reduction

¶7. (SBU) Funding for Embassy assistance to public information efforts will more than double in FY 2010, including for the Counter Narcotics Advisory Teams (CNAT) program. CNATs, which consist of 8-10 Ministry of Counter Narcotics (MCN) personnel with two international advisors, promote CN public information and CN planning within governors' offices of seven large or potentially large narcotic-producing provinces. The CNATs in Badakhshan, Nangarhar, and Helmand were instrumental in recent progress against opium cultivation in those provinces. Direct Embassy assistance to national and local CN media campaigns will also increase. Finally, to assist in the NDCS pillar of drug demand control, the Embassy will add to the 16 drug treatment centers already funded and revamp treatment practices for better and more extensive reach.

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Strengthening the Good Performers Initiative (GPI)

¶8. (SBU) GPI is an Afghan government-administered incentive program that awards development projects to provinces that reduce poppy cultivation or stay poppy-free. GPI has played an important role in Afghanistan's successful drive to increase the number of poppy-free provinces and confine narcotics cultivation to a few insecure provinces. The U.S. and UK will continue to co-fund GPI at full levels while we also seek additional international donors to increase incentives GPI offers. The Embassy, which recently hired a special advisor for MCN, will hire local engineers, accountants, and other personnel to increase MCN's capacity to administer GPI quickly and effectively.

Planning and Coordination

¶9. (SBU) ISAF's Regional Command-South (RC-S) is setting up a Combined Joint Inter-Agency Task Force (CJIATF) for intelligence fusion and comprehensive civilian-military CN planning for RC-S, where the vast majority of Afghanistan's poppy grows and where narcotics trafficking and the insurgency have developed a mutually sustaining relationship. CJIATF will provide actionable intelligence and synchronize CN, law enforcement, and military resources to target, interdict, and disrupt narco-insurgent linkages while also enabling prosecution of narco-corrupt government officials. Comprehensive CN planning in narco-prone provinces such as Helmand and Nangarhar will take place at local ISAF task forces, with participation by the CNAT, Provincial Reconstruction Teams, including support from newly created

Rule of Law partners, and other local actors.

¶10. (SBU) At the national level, the U.S. and UK embassies, along with ISAF and USFOR-A, will establish an executive level CN strategy group composed of the major international CN players with senior representation. This group will be a subset of the Embassy's Executive Working Group, which does comprehensive civilian-military planning and coordination across the spectrum of our mission in Afghanistan. The executive CN strategy group will undertake national-level CN planning and high-level coordination of operational efforts. It will also provide a joint mechanism for securing better Afghan government cooperation in CN, particularly in the arrest and prosecution of major traffickers and narco-corrupt government officials.

¶11. (SBU) A vital part of our strategy is to support and encourage visible Afghan leadership in the CN effort. We currently work closely with a small but dedicated cadre of ministers and officials. We need to continue to build capability, notably in the still weak and under resourced CNPA but also in the judicial system. Essential is constant high level pressure on political leaders to support arrests and detentions and to resist releasing politically influential traffickers or weakening existing law enforcement efforts.
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